



# Afterschool Alliance

## Evaluations Backgrounder: *A Summary of Formal Evaluations of the Academic Impact of Afterschool Programs*

**July 2008**

Although afterschool programs for children have been operating for decades in some communities, the afterschool movement—the great national awakening to the opportunity afterschool offers—is just a few years old. As public demand for afterschool has grown, so has the demand for accountability. That is particularly true in afterschool programs that spend public dollars. After all, where tax dollars flow, so must accountability to taxpayers.

Fortunately for afterschool advocates, a steady stream of afterschool evaluations are documenting gains for children, especially those who regularly participate in afterschool programs and those at highest risk of academic failure. This updated evaluations backgrounder includes summaries of:

- a meta-analysis covering 35 studies, by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL);
- a meta-analysis covering 73 studies, by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL);
- a study of 35 high-quality afterschool programs in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Michigan, Montana, New York, Oregon and Rhode Island, by researchers at the University of California, Irvine, the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Policy Studies Associates, Inc.;
- a new study of Chicago's After School Matters, by researchers at the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago;
- a study of academically focused New Hampshire programs by the RMC Research Corporation; and
- a new study of the five-city, California-based Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning (CORAL), conducted by Public/Private Ventures.

Summaries of other evaluations cover studies of LA's BEST, Citizen Schools, the YMCA of Greater New York's Virtual Y Program, the Young Scholars Program, Generacion Diez, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers throughout Texas, the Massachusetts After-School Research Study, The After-School Corporation (TASC), Foundations Inc., Project Learn, San Diego's '6 to 6' and more. A list of the studies and their key findings is provided at the end of this document on Page 31.

This compilation focuses chiefly on evaluations of afterschool programs showing positive gains on student academic achievement. A second backgrounder, available from the Afterschool Alliance website at [afterschoolalliance.org](http://afterschoolalliance.org), summarizes findings related to student safety, behavior, substance-abuse-prevention and discipline.

## The Landscape of Afterschool Evaluations

A number of different types of evaluations have been conducted over the last several years, assessing various aspects of afterschool programming. Some evaluations seek to gather data on whether programs have been structured as they were originally intended, how well they have done at meeting attendance and staffing goals, how they “fit” in the school environment and more. Others explore student and other outcomes—the effects afterschool programs have on the children who participate in them, their parents and even the communities at large.

Both types of evaluations are of great value to afterschool providers and to policy makers, and when taken together the two types of studies help identify the particular program elements and approaches most critical to accomplishing program goals. For example, studies correlating increased afterschool attendance with increased academic performance have triggered considerable discussion in the afterschool community about ways to improve student attendance in afterschool programs.

Evaluations also differ by virtue of who conducts them. Many programs self-evaluate, providing useful data and satisfying the needs of their various stakeholders: parents, funders, partnering businesses, local public officials and so on. But for academics and large funders—the federal government, state governments, the Open Society Institute, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation or the Wallace Fund, for example—more exacting standards and greater independence is often required. Such independent evaluations commissioned by such entities are the primary subject of this document.

The studies included in this backgrounder are just a few of the numerous evaluations of afterschool programs completed in recent years. To learn more about afterschool evaluation and to search a more comprehensive database of evaluations, visit the Harvard Family Research Project at <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time>.

## Summary Lessons from the Data

In reviewing the studies included in this backgrounder, a few key themes emerged. Below we present the summary lessons from the studies included in this backgrounder. The data and conclusions from these studies suggest that quality afterschool programs can have a positive impact on a number of measures of student academic achievement. Detailed descriptions and findings from all the studies, including citations, are included in the *Afterschool Evaluations in Detail* section beginning on page seven. See Appendix A, *Afterschool Evaluations at a Glance* on page 31 for a summary listing of the studies included in this backgrounder.

## **Improved School Attendance and Engagement in Learning**

- Chapin Hall's study of Chicago's After School Matters program found that students who participated in the program missed fewer days of school than their classmates, and that students who participated most frequently failed fewer core academic courses (English, Math, Science and Social Studies). The finding is particularly noteworthy because the program is not aimed at improving academics. By creating an incentive for students to attend school regularly and giving them something to look forward to after school, researchers conclude, After School Matters helped improve academic performance.
- A study conducted for the state of New Hampshire of its state- and federally-funded, academically focused afterschool programs found that more than half the students who attended regularly improved both academically and behaviorally and classroom teachers reported that students made the most progress in turning in homework on time, completing homework to teachers' satisfaction and participating in class.
- Evaluations of LA's BEST by the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation revealed that students' regular school-day attendance improved once they began participating in the afterschool program. Students also reported higher aspirations regarding finishing school and going to college. In a longitudinal study, researchers at UCLA found drop out rates among LA's BEST students are 20 percent lower than the overall district drop out rate.
- Research by the Texas State Education Agency found that strong participation in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC afterschool programs correlated with better attendance during the regular school day. "Approximately half (48 percent) of youth who participated in three quarters or more of the available 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC activities missed five or fewer days of school during the fall semester, compared to 17 percent of youth who participated in less than one quarter of the available activities.
- Policy Studies Associates five year evaluation of The After-School Corporation (TASC) afterschool programs found that regular school day attendance for the pre-K to eighth grade levels increased for participants compared to non-participants, especially for students in grades 5-8, and attendance for seventh and eighth grade participants increased by 2.7 school days in comparison to non-participants. At the high school level, regular school day attendance for students in the lowest quartile of attendance increased by 4.4 days, compared to non-participants who were also in the lowest attendance quartile.
- Pathways to Progress students in St. Paul, Minnesota experienced dramatically better school attendance—participants attended 18.44 more school days and missed 9.57 fewer school days than their nonparticipant peers.
- An evaluation of Boys & Girls Clubs' Project Learn found that engagement in reading, use of verbal skills, writing, tutoring and the study of geography all significantly increased as program involvement increased.
- Students participating in California's After School Education and Safety Program (formerly the After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program, ASLSNPP) improved their regular day attendance; with particularly large improvements for students with the lowest attendance record prior to the start of the program. Students

also demonstrated a more positive attitude toward school, enhanced confidence about learning and increased educational aspirations.

- Absences among Young Scholars participants decreased by 48 percent when they began participating in the afterschool program.
- A five-site evaluation of the Boys & Girls Clubs' national Project Learn program found a reduction in absences among participants, from 6.4 days per school year at baseline to 2.19 days per school year at follow-up. This was especially notable when compared to non-participants whose absences increased over that same 30 month period.

## **Improved Test Scores and Grades**

- The Promising Afterschool Programs Study, a study of about 3,000 low-income, ethnically-diverse elementary and middle school students, found that those who regularly attended high-quality programs over two years demonstrated gains of up to 20 percentiles and 12 percentiles in standardized math test scores respectively, compared to their peers who were routinely unsupervised during the afterschool hours.
- A meta-analysis by the University of Illinois at Chicago-based Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), "The Impact of After-School Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills," found that "Youth who participate in after-school programs improve significantly in three major areas: feelings and attitudes, indicators of behavioral adjustment, and school performance. More specifically, after-school programs succeeded in improving youths' feelings of self-confidence and self-esteem, school bonding (positive feelings and attitudes toward school), positive social behaviors, school grades and achievement test scores." The meta-analysis spanned 73 separate studies of afterschool programs.
- Students participating in LA's BEST afterschool programs demonstrated higher academic achievement on standardized tests of math, reading and language arts. In addition, language redesignation rates favored LA's BEST students when compared with non-LA's BEST students.
- Prior to participating in Young Scholars, many of the participants were retained or required to repeat a grade each year. Over five years, promotion rates for Young Scholars improved by 83 percent. Young Scholars participants also made significant gains on North Carolina's state tests. Young Scholars with at least 280 hours in the program averaged double-digit increases annually for proficiency in both math and reading. Furthermore, the number of Young Scholars receiving A's and B's increased an average of 38 percent, while the number receiving F's decreased an average of 50 percent.
- Children in the Ohio Urban School Initiative School Age Child Care Project (SACC) scored higher in every subject area tested (writing, math, reading, citizenship and science) than non-participating students from across the state, according to an evaluation by the University of Cincinnati College of Education's Evaluation Services Center.
- Policy Studies Associates' second-year evaluation of The After-School Corporation's (TASC's) program found significant differences in proficiency-level shifts among active

participants and nonparticipants who scored in the lowest proficiency level on the 1998-99 mathematics tests. When tested in 1999-2000, participants were more likely than non-participants to score at a higher proficiency level as compared to their 1998-99 performance. A similar but less pronounced pattern was observed on the reading tests administered in grades 3-8.

- Reading scores for San Diego's "6 to 6" students improved, according to evaluator WestEd. Fifty-seven percent of students increased their reading scores over the course of the studied year, and SAT-9 reading scores increased. Nearly ten percent of children moved up into the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher in 2000 by comparison to 1999 reading scores. In addition, 44 percent of students in San Diego's "6 to 6" program increased their SAT-9 math scores.
- A five-site evaluation of the Boys & Girls Clubs' national Project Learn program found average grade increases over the 30-month study period were greatest for program youth, who increased their average grades by 11 percent while comparison youth increased their average grades by only 0.4 percent.
- Students participating in Foundations, Inc. afterschool programs scored higher on math, reading, and language arts standardized tests, at every grade level, than the comparison group.
- Researchers at Fordham University found that participants in the YMCA of Greater New York Virtual Y Program demonstrated statistically significant higher gains in math test scores compared to matched nonparticipants.

### **Frequency and Duration of Afterschool Participation Increases Benefits**

- According to the Promising After-School Programs Study, a 2007 study of the effect of afterschool programs on nearly 3,000 low-income students at 35 high-quality afterschool programs across the nation, elementary school students who regularly attended the high-quality afterschool programs (alone or in combination with other activities) across two years demonstrated significant gains in standardized math test scores, compared to their peers who were routinely unsupervised during afterschool hours.
- Chapin Hall's study of Chicago's Afterschool Matters program found that, over their full high school careers, students enrolled in the program for three or more semesters and those who participated at the highest levels had higher graduation rates and lower dropout rates than similar students not in the program.
- A study conducted for the state of New Hampshire of its state- and federally-funded, academically focused afterschool programs found that "Regular attendance seems to contribute to student success.... At the middle school levels, where data were richer, more students who attended regularly showed academic improvement than students who attended less frequently. However, even students who attended sporadically showed improvement."
- LA's BEST students who participated most frequently and for the longest period of time were least likely to drop out of school.

- A five phase evaluation of the Citizen Schools program begun in 2001 found that participants with high levels of program exposure were significantly more likely to be on track to successful graduation than matched nonparticipants.
- Policy Studies Associates' found that students who participated in TASC afterschool activities the most consistently and for the longest period of time experienced the greatest math gains.
- A statewide evaluation of California's After School Education and Safety Program (formerly the After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program, ASLSNPP) by the University of California at Irvine demonstrated mathematics gains closely related to individual students' levels of participation in the program.
- The Texas State Education Agency found that academic progress was closely linked to the extent of participation in afterschool—fewer than half (46 percent) of youth who attended 25 percent or less of available afterschool reading tutorials showing improved reading ability at the end of the semester, compared to 64 percent of youth who attended more than 75 percent of reading tutorials.
- A Yale University study of afterschool participation found that children who were in the highest category of afterschool program attendance had significantly higher reading achievement than children in all other care arrangements (parent, sibling/self-care or some combination) while children at lower levels of participation outperformed children in only some of the other care arrangements.

### **Students at Greatest Risk Show Greatest Gains**

- A five phase evaluation of the Citizen Schools program found that former Citizen School participants were more likely to pass the tenth-grade Mathematics and English/Language Arts MCAS tests than were students district-wide. This finding is particularly noteworthy considering that participants as a group were more academically at-risk than the general Boston Public School population at baseline.
- According to a 10 year study of LA's BEST, participation appears to have a significant effect in reducing the hazard of dropping out for low-income students; that is, the greater the low-income status at the baseline, the longer participation in LA's BEST will keep these students in school.
- A Public/Private Ventures evaluation of the “Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning” project, an eight-year \$58 million afterschool initiative of the James Irvine Foundation, concluded that the five-city program’s tightly focused literacy programming three to four days a week produced “pronounced gains in achievement for a range of students.” Most afterschool students were elementary-school aged, more than half were designated English language learners and 89 percent were recipients of free or reduced-price lunch. The reading gains were greatest for participant youth who were two or more grade levels behind at the time of the first assessment. This improvement represents approximately three quarters of a grade level in reading (0.78).
- A 2006 meta-analysis synthesizing 35 out-of-school time (OST) afterschool program studies, conducted by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, found that afterschool programs had

positive and significant effects among students at risk of failure in reading or math, producing positive results on reading achievement, particularly in lower elementary grade levels and in high school students. Researchers also found positive and significant effects on math achievement, particularly for middle and high school students.

- The TASC program evaluation concluded that participants who were at greatest academic risk made the largest math gains, when compared to other students. Math benefits were most clearly evident for students who scored in the lowest of four proficiency levels in the year prior to TASC participation. Furthermore, among students from low-income families, the evaluation also found evidence of afterschool benefits in math after two or more years of active participation.
- North Carolina's *Support Our Students*' participants who were the furthest behind and had the most risk factors (e.g., free/reduced lunch status, single-parent households, etc.) made the greatest gains on their End of Grade (EOG) Achievement Test.
- An external evaluation of Adams County, Pennsylvania's Generacion Diez afterschool program found significantly greater gains in a number of areas (spelling achievement, math achievement, reading achievement) for participating children whose families were less engaged in school and/or were functioning at a lower level.

## Afterschool Evaluations in Detail

Over the past decade a number of important afterschool program evaluations have been conducted—more than enough to demonstrate that quality afterschool programs help children achieve. Following are summaries of some of the most recent evaluations. The summaries are organized by scope, beginning with a meta-analysis covering evaluations of afterschool programs and evaluations of programs that are national in scope. We then turn to evaluations of programs operating at a state level and end with local or program level evaluations. Studies that are newly included or updated for this 2008 version of the evaluations backgrounder are indicated as such.

### Large-Scale Studies



#### *The Promising After-School Programs Study*

A study by researchers at the University of California, Irvine, the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Policy Studies Associates, Inc. examined the academic impact of high-quality afterschool programs on a group of nearly 3,000 low-income students at 35 programs in Aurora, Colorado; Baldwin, Michigan; Bridgeport, Connecticut; Central Falls, Rhode Island; Denver, Colorado; Los Angeles, California; Missoula, Montana; New York, New York; Oakland, California; Pawtucket, Rhode Island; Salem, Oregon; San Diego, California; San Ysidro, California; and Seaside, California. The study, conducted with support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, was released in October 2007.

Noting that many afterschool participants also took part in other structured or adult-supervised afternoon activities one or more days a week, researchers compared results across three groups of students: children in afterschool programs (“program only”; children in afterschool programs two to three days a week and in other structured or adult-supervised activity the other days of the week (“program plus”); and children who were frequently unsupervised in the afternoons (“unsupervised”).

In screening programs for inclusion in the study, researchers focused on “high quality” programs. Researchers described the screening for quality thusly:

“Using a rating system, researchers assessed programs based on evidence of supportive relationships between staff and child participants and among participants, and on evidence of rich and varied academic support, recreation, arts opportunities and other enrichment activities. Ratings were consistently positive. Students typically were highly engaged with one another and with program activities, and group leaders structured activities to maximize learning and positive relationships. Adults facilitated activities without imposing controls that limited student learning opportunities. Disruptive or chaotic behavior was rarely observed; when behavioral disruptions occurred, leaders managed them calmly and constructively.” [page 2] [This and subsequent quotes from “Outcomes Linked to High-Quality Afterschool Programs: Longitudinal Findings from the Study of Promising Afterschool Programs,” Deborah Lowe Vandell, University of California, Irvine, Elizabeth R. Reisner, Policy Studies Associates, Inc. and Kim M. Pierce, University of California, Irvine available at

[http://www.policystudies.com/studies/youth/Promising%20Programs%20FINAL.pdf.\]](http://www.policystudies.com/studies/youth/Promising%20Programs%20FINAL.pdf)

Researchers gathered two years of data, and found that:

- “regular participation in high-quality afterschool programs is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits as well as reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students.” [page 1]
- “Elementary school students who regularly attended the high-quality afterschool programs (alone or in combination with other activities) across two years demonstrated significant gains in standardized math test scores, compared to their peers who were routinely unsupervised during afterschool hours.” [page 5]
- “Program Only and Program Plus students also posted gains in teacher reports of work habits (effect sizes of .31 and .35, respectively) and task persistence (.23 and .30, respectively) over the two-year period.” [page 5]
- “Program Only and Program Plus students posted significant gains in teachers’ reports of students’ social skills with peers...and prosocial behaviors.... Program Only and Program Plus students also posted significant reductions in aggressive behaviors with peers...” [page 5]
- “Middle school students who regularly attended the high-quality afterschool programs (alone or in combination with other activities) across two years demonstrated significant gains in standardized math test scores, compared to their peers who were routinely unsupervised during afterschool hours. Regular participation in the programs was associated with gains of 12 percentiles in math achievement test scores over the two-year period, relative to students who were routinely unsupervised after school.” [page 6]

- “Reductions in misconduct over the two-year period were reported by Program Plus and Program Only middle school students, relative to the Low Supervision group.” [page 6]
- “Middle school students who regularly participated in afterschool programs also reported reduced use of drugs and alcohol, compared to those in the Low Supervision group.” [page 6]



### *CASEL's Meta-Analysis of the Impact of After-School Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills*

The *Impact of After-School Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills* study, by Roger P. Weissberg, President of the University of Illinois at Chicago-based Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and Professor Joseph Durlak, Loyola University Chicago, was intended to fill what the authors regarded as a gap in existing research. While many studies have focused on afterschool’s impact on students’ academic achievement, large-scale studies focused on programs’ impact on students’ personal and social skills were less common. Their meta-analysis, released in 2007 with funding from the William T. Grant Foundation, used data from 73 existing studies to identify broad conclusions. The two they deemed most significant:

- “Youth who participate in after-school programs improve significantly in three major areas: feelings and attitudes, indicators of behavioral adjustment, and school performance. More specifically, after-school programs succeeded in improving youths’ feelings of self-confidence and self-esteem, school bonding (positive feelings and attitudes toward school), positive social behaviors, school grades and achievement test scores. They also reduced problem behaviors (e.g., aggression, noncompliance and conduct problems) and drug use. In sum, after-school programs produced multiple benefits that pertain to youths’ personal, social and academic life.
- “It was possible to identify effective programs: Programs that used evidence-based skill training approaches were consistently successful in producing multiple benefits for youth, while those that did not use such procedures were not successful in any outcome area.” [All quotations from “The Impact of Afterschool Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills,” Joseph A. Durlak, Loyola University Chicago; Roger P. Weissberg, University of Illinois Chicago; Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2007, available at <http://www.casel.org/downloads/ASP-Full.pdf>.]

The authors considered programs to be using “evidence-based skill training approaches” if they used a “sequenced set of activities to achieve skill objectives,” “active forms of learning,” and at least one program element “focused on developing personal or social skills” that targeted specific skills.



## ***The 2006 McREL Meta-Analysis of Effects of Out-of-School Time Programs for At-Risk Students***

In the summer of 2006, Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) released a meta-analysis of 35 separate studies of out-of-school time programs, after sifting through hundreds of studies spanning many years. The study was conducted with funding from the U.S. Department of Education. A meta-analysis is a statistical re-analysis of the results of several studies on a related topic, conducted for the purpose of integrating the studies' findings, notwithstanding differences in their respective research methodologies. The studies selected for inclusion in the McREL meta-analysis all met rigorous methodological standards.

The studies included in the meta-analysis all employed control or comparison groups to estimate the effects of afterschool programs on students at risk of failure in reading or math. The study was published in *The Review of Educational Research*, 76, 275–313, available for a fee at <http://rer.sagepub.com/content/vol76/issue2/>, and is summarized on the Harvard Family Research Project's website at <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/meta-analysis-of-effects-of-out-of-school-time-programs-for-at-risk-students>.<sup>1</sup> Researchers included Patricia A. Lauer, Rocky Mountain Center for Health Promotion and Education; Motoko Akiba, University of Missouri, Columbia; Stephanie B. Wilkerson, Magnolia Consulting, LLC; Helen S. Apthorp and Mya L. Martin-Glenn, Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL); David Snow, Billings Public Schools. This same team conducted a 2004 McREL meta-analysis summarized later in this document.

Researchers found that programs had positive and significant effects on reading achievement, particularly in lower elementary grade levels, and in high school students. They also found positive and significant effects on math achievement, particularly for middle and high school students.

Researchers conclude:

- “OST programs can have positive effects on the achievement of at-risk students in reading and mathematics.... [italics in original] Our results contrast with the first-year evaluation of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (U.S. Department of Education, 2003), which found no statistically significant effects of after-school programs on reading or mathematics achievement for elementary or middle school students. However, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century evaluation documented great variation in the characteristics of centers across school districts, particularly in the range of activities offered and in the emphasis on academic assistance. Conclusions about the ineffectiveness of that program might be due to the aggregation of interventions that have different characteristics in the evaluation study. Our synthesis results indicate that program duration and student grouping influence program effectiveness.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) maintains a rich database of information on out-of-school-time evaluations, from which much information in this report is drawn. A complete listing of HFRP's summaries is available at <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/evaldatabase.html>.

Aggregating results across programs that vary in these characteristics can mask positive outcomes.” [All bullets quoted from *The Review of Educational Research*, 76, p. 307]

- “*Students in both elementary and secondary grades can benefit from OST programs for improved reading; in contrast, there are indications that benefits for mathematics achievement occur primarily in the secondary grades.*”
- “*OST programs need not focus solely on academic activities to have positive effects on student achievement.* Study results indicate that OST programs in which activities are both academic and social can have positive influences on student achievement. This finding supports the belief that OST programs should address the developmental needs of the whole child...”

## Evaluations of State-Level Initiatives and Programs



### **New Hampshire Study of Academically Focused Afterschool Programs**

In an effort to facilitate collection and analysis of data about afterschool programs’ impact in the state, the Governor of New Hampshire created a task force to develop a common reporting program for state- and federally-funded programs. In 2005, the task force published its first report based on the resulting data, “Afterschool Learning: A Study of Academically Focused Afterschool Programs in New Hampshire,” by Susan L. Frankel, Ph.D., Kim Streitburger and Elizabeth Goldman of Portsmouth-based RMC Research Corporation.

The study examined student outcomes at programs that focused on academics and that were funded by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers initiative and/or the state’s Out-of-School Matters! New Hampshire. Research methods included gathering attendance records from programs, surveying teachers and students about behavior and academic achievement, and surveying afterschool program directors about their staffing and program characteristics.

The studied programs had varying curricula, but each shared three common components, authors said: “homework and tutoring; hands-on projects, service learning, and other enrichment activities to develop skills that support and deepen in-school learning; and non-academic activities, from sports to dance to drama club, that build positive relationships and improve critical thinking skills, motivation, and self-confidence.” Findings were based on data from afterschool programs in 16 elementary and 13 middle schools, serving nearly 3,000 students in all. Among key findings:

“More than half the students who attended regularly improved both academically and behaviorally.” [All quotes from “Afterschool Learning: A Study of Academically Focused Afterschool Programs in New Hampshire,” by Susan L. Frankel, Ph.D., Kim Streitburger and Elizabeth Goldman, available online at [http://www.plustime.org/\\_pdf/Plus\\_Time\\_Programs.pdf](http://www.plustime.org/_pdf/Plus_Time_Programs.pdf).]

- “Afterschool programs improve students’ learning skills. Classroom teachers reported that students made the most progress in turning in homework on time, completing homework to teachers’ satisfaction, and participating in class.”

- “Regular attendance seems to contribute to student success.... At the middle school level, where data were richer, more students who attended regularly showed academic improvement than students who attended less frequently. However, even students who attended sporadically showed improvement.”

### ***Young Scholars Program - North Carolina***

In 1999, the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation (ZSRF) came to the conclusion that extended day programs could go far beyond their original goals and not only provide supervision during afterschool hours but also provide an academic boost. Working with the Public School Forum, ZSRF envisioned a program that would combine the best elements of traditional extended day programs with academic support that would engage young people’s minds. The result was the Young Scholars Program. From 2000-2005, Young Scholars Programs across the state of North Carolina served nearly 1,000 young people in 19 elementary and middle schools.

In August 2006, ZSRF released a report documenting the program’s outcomes. That report, available at [http://www.nccap.net/Summer2006\\_ForumReport.pdf](http://www.nccap.net/Summer2006_ForumReport.pdf), found that:

- “Young Scholars participants made significant gains on the state’s ABC tests. Young Scholars with at least 280 hours in the program averaged double-digit increases annually for proficiency in both math and reading. Throughout the five-year period, participants in Young Scholar programs consistently exceeded the state’s expected rate of academic growth.” [All bullets quoted from *Young Scholars Program: An Overview of the Benefits that Promising Students Gain From Extended Day Programs*]
- “Prior to participating in Young Scholars, many of the participants were retained or required to repeat a grade each year. Over the five year time covered by this study, promotion rates for Young Scholars improved by 83 percent.”
- “Young Scholars school attendance improved substantially—absences among participants decreased by 48 percent.”
- “Young Scholars participation during the regular day increased dramatically, as did their grades. The number of Young Scholars receiving A’s and B’s increased an average of 38 percent while the number receiving F’s decreased an average of 50 percent.”
- “Young Scholars parents became far more involved in school activities. The longer students were involved in the program, the more involved parents became.”

### ***The Massachusetts After-School Research Study (MARS)***

In 2005, the Intercultural Center for Research in Education and the National Institute on Out-of-School Time at Wellesley College published the results of the Massachusetts After-School Research Study (MARS), which examined the track records of 78 different Massachusetts afterschool centers serving more than 4,100 children. The study’s objective was to “identify those program characteristics that are most closely related to high quality implementation, and to explore the links between program quality and youth outcomes.” [All quotes from “MARS,” available at <http://www.wcwonline.org/mars/MARSfull.pdf>.]

Among the study's findings:

- “Staff make a difference in program quality, and staff who have a strong educational background and appropriate training are key to program quality. At the same time, given current wages and working conditions, many programs can not attract such staff, or even if recruited, lose a significant portion of staff each year.”
- “A highly qualified coordinator or program director is key to setting the tone for a program that promotes youth engagement, staff engagement, and the quality of activities and homework.”
- “Most programs in the MARS sample had very low staff-to-child ratios, typically between 1:7 and 1:9. We found clear links between low ratios and high quality, as has previous research in the field. At the same time, where ratios are very low, programs may want to consider the trade-off between paying higher salaries and having additional staff.”
- “One of the key youth outcomes—relations with adults—was positively associated with the quality of family relations we observed at pick-up time. Programs rated high on this component of the APT also tended to cite parent, community and volunteer support as strengths of their programs. This finding suggests that all afterschool providers could benefit from paying attention to their relationships with the families of the youth in their programs.”

### ***21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers -Texas***

At the end of the 2003-2004 school year, Texas had 32 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center grantees, operating 136 afterschool sites. Relying on pre-program and post-program data collected from sites as part of grant reporting requirements, the Texas Education Agency, the state’s department of education, compiled and analyzed data on student performance and program implementation. A summary of the evaluation’s findings by the Harvard Family Research Project is available at <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/21st-century-community-learning-centers-texas/evaluation-2003-2004-evaluation-of-2003-04-projects>. The complete evaluation study can be accessed online at [http://www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/progeval/OutOfSchoolLearning/21cclc\\_03\\_04\\_eval.pdf](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/progeval/OutOfSchoolLearning/21cclc_03_04_eval.pdf). Among the TEA’s chief findings:

Among participating students, academic progress was closely linked to the extent of participation in afterschool. “Less than half (46 percent) of youth who attended 25 percent or less of available tutorials showed improved reading ability at the end of the semester, compared to 64 percent of youth who attended more than 75 percent of reading tutorials. Conversely, 40 percent of participants who attended less than one quarter of the fall reading tutorials experienced a decline in their reading ability, as measured by pretests and posttests, compared to just 20 percent of youth who attended more than 75 percent of the reading tutorials. Similar results were observed for reading in the spring 2004 term. After controlling for demographic factors, youth who participated in 26 percent to 50 percent, 51 percent to 75 percent, and over 75 percent of available spring reading tutorials showed more increased reading ability than youth attending less than 25 percent. These relationships were all statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).” [“A Profile of the Evaluation of 21st Century Community Learning Centers—Texas,” page 9, Harvard Family Research Project, <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/21st-century-community-learning-centers-texas/evaluation-2003-2004-evaluation-of-2003-04-projects>]

[evaluation-of-2003-04-projects](#).] Similar findings were reported for mathematics and science, especially during the fall semester.

Strong participation in afterschool correlated with better attendance during the regular school day. “Approximately half (48 percent) of youth who participated in three quarters or more of the available 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC activities missed five or fewer days of school during the fall semester, compared to 17 percent of youth who participated in less than one quarter of the available activities. The corresponding percentages for spring were 33 percent and 26 percent, respectively. Youth who participated in 50 percent or more of the available 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC activities were absent approximately two regular school days less in the spring term than youth who participated in less than 50 percent of the available 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC activities. This difference was statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ). After controlling for demographic factors, those youth participating in 26 percent–50 percent, 51 percent–75 percent, and 75 percent–100 percent of available activities missed significantly fewer days of school than those participating in 25 percent or fewer activities ( $p < .01$ ).” [HFRP Profile, page 10.]

### ***After School Education and Safety Program - California***

Begun in 1998 as the California Afterschool Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program (ASLSNPP), the After School Education and Safety Program (ASES) provides \$550 million annually in matching funds to local partnerships of school districts, community groups, and local governments to provide before and afterschool programs for students. In selecting grantees, the state gives priority to schools where 50 percent or more of pupils are eligible for free or reduced-cost meals. Programs are designed locally, but are required to include an educational and literacy component to provide tutoring or homework assistance in one or more of the following subject areas: language arts, mathematics, history and social science, or science; and an educational enrichment component, which may include but is not limited to, recreation and prevention activities. “Such activities might involve the visual and performing arts, music, physical activity, health/nutrition promotion, and general recreation; career awareness and work preparation activities; community service-learning; and other youth development activities based on student needs and interests.” [California’s *After School Education and Safety Program Description*, at

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ba/as/pgmdescription.asp>.] In all, 947 afterschool programs were funded during the ASES program’s first two years.

Working with the California Department of Education, the Education Department of the University of California at Irvine conducted evaluations of two academic years of the program, from 1999 to 2001, releasing results in February 2002. The evaluation relied on data supplied to the state by participating programs, as required by law, and examined student and parent satisfaction with their programs, as well as students’ academic outcomes.

Findings included:

- SAT-9 scores of participating students increased faster than those of students statewide. In reading, 4.2 percent of afterschool students moved from out of the lowest 25 percent of their classes. “This increase is more than twice the increase found among all students statewide (1.9 percent)...” [Evaluation of California’s *After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program*, Department of Education, University of California at Irvine, February

- 1, 2002, page 4.] In math, similar findings: 2.5 percent of afterschool participants moved out of the lowest quartile, compared with 1.9 percent statewide. [Evaluation, page 6.]
- Significantly, gains were closely related to individual students' levels of participation in the program. "Among students who participated for more than 150 days (approximately 7.5 months), there was an increase of 4.9 percent in students above the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, an increase considerably larger than that found statewide. *The scores suggest that, particularly for students who participate in the ASLSNPP for substantial periods of time, there is a closing of the gap in Math achievement between low-income and other students.*" [Evaluation, page 6. Emphasis in original.]
  - "The regular school day attendance of students in the ASLSNPP increased between 1999 and 2000. Among the ASLSNPP participants who were absent 5 percent or more days in 1999, the average increase in attendance was 5.6 days. Among those who were absent 10 percent or more days in 1999, the average increase in attendance was 11 days. For those absent 15 percent or more days in 1999, the average increase in attendance was 17 days." [Harvard Family Research Project, Summary of ASLSNPP Evaluation, <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/after-school-education-and-safety-program-california>, September 3, 2002.]

### ***The After-School Corporation (TASC) - New York***

TASC supports 322 programs across New York City serving more than 300,000 kids, and helped establish programs for another 50,000 kids in the New York region. TASC's mission is to enhance the quality, availability and sustainability of afterschool programming in New York City and beyond, and change public policy so that every child in every community across the nation will have access to free, quality after-school programming by 2010. TASC began in 1998 with a multi-year challenge grant from the Open Society Institute (OSI) of up to \$125 million, based on the condition that for every dollar OSI contributes, TASC is responsible for raising three dollars in other public and private monies. To date, TASC has exceeded their goal and leveraged \$538 million in public and private funds to support TASC programs. TASC provides grants to nonprofit organizations to establish partnerships with individual public schools, and the resulting afterschool programs follow a core set of program components.

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation, joined by the W.T. Grant Foundation and the Atlantic Philanthropies provided funding to the Washington-based Policy Studies Associates to conduct a five-year evaluation, including annual summary reports. The final installment of the Policy Studies evaluation of TASC covered data from four full years of program operations and was completed in 2004. When all was said and done, researchers concluded:

- "School principals reported significant benefits for students who participated in TASC programs. Ninety-five percent said that TASC gave students access to activities not available during the regular school day, 79 percent said that participants' parents expressed more positive feelings about the school than before, and 66 percent said that after-school participants received special opportunities to hone literacy skills." [This and subsequent quotations from this study are from *Building Quality, Scale, and Effectiveness in After-School Programs: Major Findings of the TASC Evaluation*, Policy Studies Associates, Inc.,

page 3, available at  
[http://www.policystudies.com/studies/youth/TASC%20Summary%20Report%20Final.pdf.\]](http://www.policystudies.com/studies/youth/TASC%20Summary%20Report%20Final.pdf)

- “Parents also expressed satisfaction with TASC services, based, as reported in surveys administered to a convenience sample of parents, on their children’s enjoyment of program activities, their children’s completion of homework before coming home, and the reassurance of knowing that their children were safe and cared for after school, which allowed parents to work more hours and miss work less often.”
- Analyses of data on academic performance and school attendance show that participation in TASC activities was linked to improvements in both areas, especially for students who participated regularly in TASC programming over two consecutive years. At the elementary- and middle-grades level:
  - “Analyses indicate after-school benefits in mathematics achievement, especially for those participants who attended TASC programs regularly and for more than a year.... Comparable findings in reading and English language arts were not apparent, although participants in some programs consistently out-gained comparable nonparticipants in this area.”
  - “Participants showed greater gains in school attendance than did nonparticipants, with the greatest benefits at grades 5-8.”

At the high school level:

- “After-school participants passed more Regents exams and earned more high school credits than nonparticipants, but conclusions from this evidence are limited by the fact that high school participants were already achieving at substantially higher levels than nonparticipants before entering a TASC program.”
- “The difference that reflects the clearest association with TASC high school participation is in improved school attendance. When compared to nonparticipants with similar records of prior school attendance, TASC participants showed significantly more positive school attendance after a year of TASC participation (although the attendance of both participants and nonparticipants declined over grades 9-12). For example, the difference in the attendance gain of participants and similar nonparticipants in the lowest attendance quartile during the year before enrolling in TASC was +2.4 percentage points over one year, or the equivalent of a net gain of +4.4 school days in a 181-day school year (effect size of +0.27).”

#### ***North Carolina’s ‘Support Our Students’***

In 1994, the state of North Carolina launched its “Support Our Students” initiative (SOS), to provide funding for afterschool programs across the state. The program offers grants in the \$60,000 to \$250,000 range to nonprofit organizations in the state—one per county, each of which coordinates services in their counties. In 2001-2002, the program provided \$12.5 million to nonprofits in 98 counties. In that same year, the program supported programs in 190 school-based sites, and 54 community-based sites, providing afterschool services to 16,000 students during the school year, and summer programming for 10,000 students. By 2003-2004, the

program served students in all 100 counties and raised around \$10 million from other grants, in-kind donations, and volunteer labor valued at more than \$1 million.

An evaluation of the 2003-2004 year's programs, conducted by EDSTAR, an independent research and analysis firm based in Raleigh, North Carolina, found the following:

- “Among students who participated in SOS Programs, 89 percent scored at grade level on their End-of-Grade Math tests, and 81 percent scored at grade level on their End-of-Grade Reading tests,” exceeding statewide increases in scores. [All quotes for this study are from *North Carolina’s Support Our Students 2003-2004 Program Highlights*, at [http://www.edstar.biz/edstar/reports/file/SOS\\_2004\\_highlight.doc](http://www.edstar.biz/edstar/reports/file/SOS_2004_highlight.doc)]
- Classroom teachers reported that more than 40 percent of the regularly attending participants improved their grade in English and/or math.
- “35 percent of middle school students and 49 percent of elementary students reported that they enjoy school more since joining the SOS Program.”
- “Nearly a third of the SOS Program participants’ math and English teachers reported improved classroom behavior.”

Findings from an evaluation of the 2001-2002 school year also show positive results:

- “The percentages of students who scored at grade level proficiency increased in both reading and math, with the greatest increase in reading—from 67 percent at grade level to 71 percent.” [A summary of the evaluation’s findings by the Harvard Family Research Project is available at <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/north-carolina-support-our-students-sos-initiative/evaluation-2001-2002>. This and subsequent quotes for this study are from the HFRP summary.]
- “Minority students made greater improvements than White students in both math and reading.”
- “African Americans made greater improvements in reading than any other demographic group; minority participants overall made nearly twice the gain of White students in reading scores.”
- “Students continued to make steady, consistent improvement each year they participated in SOS. The average yearly improvement was slightly less than half a proficiency level.”
- “Of the three-year SOS participants, more than two thirds had improved at least two proficiency levels in reading and math, compared with the year before joining SOS.”
- “Except for sixth graders, SOS participants who were the furthest behind and had the most risk factors (e.g., free/reduced lunch status, single-parent households, etc.) made the greatest gains on EOG. Evaluators surmised that sixth graders often had problems making the transition to middle school, and recommended that sixth-grade transition programs be implemented.”

### ***Ohio Urban School Initiative School Age Child Care Project***

The Urban School Initiative School Age Child Care Project (SACC) funds a variety of afterschool programs in Ohio urban school districts. The University of Cincinnati College of Education's Evaluation Services Center conducted a thorough review of the program's 1998-1999 school year, measuring both project design and its outcomes. Data collection included document reviews, observation of programs, surveys and questionnaires. Among the findings:

- “Ohio Proficiency Tests scores for both 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders showed that SACC children exceeded the state-wide percentages of students meeting proficiency standards. SACC 4<sup>th</sup> grade students’ scores exceeded the statewide percentages of students meeting proficiency standards in every subject area tested: writing, reading mathematics, citizenship, and science. SACC 6<sup>th</sup> graders exceeded the statewide percentages of students meeting proficiency standards in four of the five areas: writing, reading mathematics, and citizenship.” [This and subsequent quotes for this study are from Harvard Family Research Project at <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/ohio-urban-school-initiative-school-age-child-care-project.>] ”
- “School absence and tardiness were reduced for participating students. First graders who were not in a SACC program during kindergarten reduced the number of school days they missed from an average of eight during their kindergarten year to an average of three days during their 1998-99 1st grade year. Eighth graders who were not in a SACC program during 7th grade reduced the average number of school days missed from 18 to five.”
- “Parents participating in interviews or completing surveys felt the programs had positive impacts on their families.”

### **Local or Program Level Evaluations**



#### ***Public/Private Ventures Evaluation of CORAL***

In 1999, the James Irvine Foundation launched an eight-year, \$58 million afterschool initiative to improve the educational performance of low-achieving students in five California cities. “Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning,” (CORAL), funded programs in the lowest-performing schools in Fresno, Long Beach, Pasadena, Sacramento and San Jose.

In 2004, the Foundation sharpened the focus of the initiative and brought Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) into the project to help with intensifying the academic focus, and to evaluate program effectiveness. P/PV’s evaluation commenced with the 2004–2005 school year, during which time total CORAL enrollment statewide was 5,321 students across the five cities. Most were elementary-school aged, more than half were designated English learners and 89 percent were recipients of free or reduced-price lunch.

At the start of the evaluation, the students’ scores on the California Standards Test-English Language Arts (CST-ELA), from spring 2004, showed that only a small portion (16 percent) met or exceeded the grade-level proficiency standards for reading. Of the sample explored in most

depth in this evaluation, 50 percent were reading two or more grades below level, and an additional 20 percent were reading one grade below level.

In fall 2004, CORAL programs began offering a tightly focused literacy program three to four days a week, for 60 to 90 minutes each day. Programs relied on what P/PV describes as “concrete strategies for helping children far behind in reading skills improve, while also bringing literature and reading to life for the children. This programming was based on the core strategies of balanced literacy, a model that reflects current research on developing competent readers.” It included such activities as “read-alouds,” book discussions, writing, vocabulary, skill development and independent reading. [page iv.] [This and subsequent quotes for this study are from *Advancing Achievement: Findings from an Independent Evaluation of a Major After-School Initiative* available online at [http://www.ppv.org/ppv/youth/youth\\_publications.asp?section\\_id=8#pub225.](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/youth/youth_publications.asp?section_id=8#pub225.)]

“These changes led to pronounced gains in achievement for a range of students,” according to evaluators. [page iii.] Specifically, they found:

- “Children’s reading success was strongly related to the quality of literacy programming. CORAL participants showed greater gains in grade-level reading and performed better on standardized tests when they were exposed to more consistent and higher-quality literacy activities. Results from the first year of the evaluation indicated greater gains over five months on the individualized reading assessment (.45 grade-levels in reading) for children exposed to consistent implementation of the balanced literacy strategies—read-alouds, book discussions, independent reading, writing, vocabulary development and skill development activities—and higher-quality implementation of those strategies. In contrast, those children exposed to inconsistent or low-quality implementation of the literacy strategies gained just .26 grade-levels in reading.” [page v.]
- “In the second year of the evaluation, when almost all of the staff leading the literacy activities had improved and were consistently using the literacy strategies, the average reading gain for all children in the sample (based on the individualized reading assessment) was .44 grade levels—comparable to the average gain of .45 for children exposed to higher-quality activities during Year One. Also in Year Two, children in groups where team leaders used stronger classroom practices (the instructor offered strong adult support, was skilled at group management, provided high-quality instruction and made connections between the children’s lives and the books they were reading) in combination with more consistent and higher-quality implementation of the literacy strategies were more likely to have a positive outcome on the CST-ELA [California Standards Test-English Language Arts] test.” [page v.]
- “The stronger the children’s sense of belonging to the program, the more likely they were to have a positive change in outcomes that included enjoyment of reading, liking and wanting to go to school, and time spent reading after school.” [page v.]



### ***Chapin Hall Study of After School Matters***

Chicago's "After School Matters" program was created in 2000, as an afterschool job training program, initially focused on the arts, but subsequently expanded to include sports, technology and communications. Led by Maggie Daley, wife of Mayor Richard Daley, Jr., the program offers paid internships to teenagers in some of Chicago's poorest neighborhoods. As of 2006, the program, working with its partners, the City of Chicago, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), the Chicago Park District, and the Chicago Public Library, had grown to include 725 programs in 35 schools, providing more than 22,000 apprenticeships and other opportunities for teens.

The program requires students to attend school during the day in order to participate in the paid internship program. A 2006 study, "After-School Programs and Academic Impact: A Study of Chicago's After School Matters," [available at [http://www.chapinhall.org/content\\_director.aspx?arid=1444&afid=335&dt=1](http://www.chapinhall.org/content_director.aspx?arid=1444&afid=335&dt=1)] by researchers Robert Goerge, Gretchen R. Cusick, Miriam Wasserman, and Robert Matthew Gladden, all of the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, examined the program's impact on daily attendance and performance of participating students.

- After accounting for student demographic characteristics and prior attendance records, researchers found that students who participated in the program missed fewer days of school than their classmates, and that students who participated most frequently failed fewer core academic courses (English, Math, Science, and Social Studies).
- Over their full high school careers, students enrolled in the program for three or more semesters and those who participated at the highest levels had higher graduation rates and lower dropout rates than similar students not in the program.

*Authors noted that the finding of improved academic performance is particularly noteworthy because the program is not aimed at improving academics. Rather, it focuses on improving students' work skills. But by creating an incentive for students to attend school regularly and giving them something to look forward to after school, researchers conclude, After School Matters helped improve academic performance, even though the program is not designed specifically for that purpose.*



### ***Citizen Schools***

Since 1995, the Boston-based Citizen Schools has provided afterschool and summer programs designed to provide children with "authentic, hands-on learning experiences, supportive relationships with adults, and positive youth development opportunities." The program includes help with homework, team-building activities, "apprenticeships," and more. The program is based in public schools, and seeks to coordinate its work with school-day teachers. In fall 2002, Citizen Schools expanded beyond its home market, to create programs in San Jose, California; Houston, Texas; and Worcester and Framingham, Massachusetts.

In 2001, Citizen Schools began sponsoring a five-phase evaluation conducted by Policy Studies Associates, Inc. The most recent phase of the research was released in January 2008 and is available at

<http://www.policystudies.com/studies/youth/Citizen%20Schools%20Phase%20V%20report.pdf>. “Establishing a Foundation for Progress Toward High School Graduation: Findings from Phase V of the Citizen Schools Evaluation,” found:

- “Former 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy participants enrolled in high-quality high schools at a significantly higher rate than matched nonparticipants. Even though many former participants attended high-quality high schools with noteworthy academic demands, former participants continued to be academically engaged and successful in ninth and tenth grade. Former 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy participants also attended school at a higher rate than matched nonparticipants in ninth and tenth grade. Participants were more likely than matched nonparticipants to pass their third-period English course in ninth grade and third-period mathematics course in tenth grade. In tenth grade, former 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy participants’ academic success was reflected in MCAS performance. Participants outperformed matched nonparticipants on the English/Language Arts MCAS assessment.” [All bullet points for this study are quoted from *Establishing a Foundation for Progress Toward High School Graduation: Findings from Phase V of the Citizen Schools Evaluation*, page 39.]
- “Findings from Phase V also show that Citizen Schools is making progress in supporting grade promotion and high school graduation. Former 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy participants with high levels of program exposure had a significantly higher rate of on-time promotion to tenth grade than did matched nonparticipants. Participants’ progress toward on-time graduation looks promising. Participants overall and those with high levels of program exposure were significantly more likely to be “on-track” to graduation than matched nonparticipants.”
- “In addition to outperforming a group of matched nonparticipants on several of the evaluation’s indicators of high school success, former Citizen School participant were more likely to pass the tenth-grade Mathematics and English/Language Arts MCAS tests than were students district-wide. This finding is particularly noteworthy considering that participants as a group were more academically at-risk than the general BPS [Boston Public Schools] population at baseline.”

### ***The YMCA of Greater New York’s Virtual Y Program***

Since spring 1996, the YMCA of Greater New York has run a *Virtual Y* initiative—a school-based afterschool program serving 2<sup>nd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> graders five afternoons a week. In the 1997-98 school year, the program expanded from its initial ten pilot sites to operate in as many as 100 sites, and no fewer than 66 sites, each year since. More than 50,000 children have participated. The program is aimed at lower income public schoolchildren, providing a safe environment where children receive reinforcement in reading, math, and healthy lifestyles, as well as training intended to emphasize such values as respect, responsibility, honesty and caring.

The program has undergone several evaluations by the National Center for Schools and Communities (NCSC) at Fordham University. In 2005, NCSC published an overview of seven

years of research, *The Virtual Y Afterschool Program: A Ray of Hope for Urban Public Elementary School Children*, available at [http://www.ncscatfordham.org/binarydata/files/rayofsunshine\\_final.pdf](http://www.ncscatfordham.org/binarydata/files/rayofsunshine_final.pdf)). The report found:

- “Across years, teachers reported between 85 and 91 percent of program participants as having behavior problems, usually mild. The greatest problems were consistently in the areas of task motivation, frustration, tolerance, and learning skills.” [All quotes for this study are from *The Virtual Y Afterschool Program: A Ray of Hope for Urban Public Elementary School Children*, pages 8-9.]
- “In all years, the data showed statistically significant and moderate to large improvements on all seven subscales and on the overall behavior scale.”
- “NCSC analyses found effects for children at each level of behavioral difficulty from mild to severe. The likelihood of obtaining chance differences in performance as large as those found in this study is less than one percent.”
- Virtual Y students outperformed a comparison group in attendance and mathematics, although not in reading.

### ***Generacion Diez - Adams County, Pennsylvania***

Adams County, Pennsylvania’s Generacion Diez (G-10) afterschool program is aimed specifically at the children of migrant workers in the area. Among its goals for children and their families is improving the academic achievement of the participating 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders. A series of studies conducted by Nathaniel R. Riggs and Mark T. Greenberg, of the Prevention Research Center at Pennsylvania State University, summarized by the Harvard Family Research Project at <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/generacion-diez>, identified a number of positive outcomes, interesting also because of the studies’ findings about which students benefited most. The most recent study examined data collected between 2001 and 2003.

Quoting from HFRP’s summary:

- “From pretest to posttest, participants’ scores increased significantly in reading, spelling, and math ( $p < .01$ ).”
- “Among the entire sample, more acculturated children showed significantly greater gains in reading achievement over the course of the G-10 program ( $p < .01$ ), as did children whose parents reported less engagement in children’s school activities ( $p < .05$ ). No significant differences in achievement were found by parent-teacher contact or family functioning.”
- “For children younger than 8 years old, the following groups showed significantly greater gains in reading achievement: more acculturated children ( $p < .05$ ), children in families with lower family functioning ( $p < .05$ ), children whose parents reported fewer parent-teacher contacts ( $p < .01$ ), and children of parents who reported less engagement in children’s school activities ( $p < .01$ ). For children 8 years old and older, none of the assessed variables predicted change in children’s reading achievement.”

- “For the entire sample, more acculturated children, children whose families were functioning at a lower level, and children of parents who reported less school engagement demonstrated significantly greater gains in spelling achievement ( $p < .05$  for each).”
- “For the entire sample, children whose parents reported less engagement with their children’s school activities at pretest showed significantly greater gains in math achievement across the program year ( $p < .01$ ). No significant results were found for acculturation, family functioning, or parent-teacher contacts.”
- “For children younger than 8 years old, children of parents who were less engaged in school activities showed significantly greater gains in math achievement ( $p < .05$ ). No significant results were found for acculturation, family functioning, or parent-teacher contacts.”
- “For children 8 years and older, children from lower functioning families and children whose parents reported less [engagement] with their children’s school activities showed significantly greater gains in math achievement ( $p <.05$  and  $p <.01$ , respectively). No significant results were found for acculturation or parent-teacher contacts.”

### ***Mahoney and Lord Ecological Analysis of After-School Program Participation***

One important and increasingly appreciated challenge researchers confront in evaluating the success of afterschool programs is sorting out the relative effects of the many different afternoon arrangements that parents have settled on for their children. Some children spend all five afternoons a week in an afterschool program, others spend all five in the care of parents or another adult. But many children spend their afternoons in some combination of settings, often shuttling from an afterschool program to some other care.

In July 2005 Joseph Mahoney and Heather Lord of Yale University and Erica Carryl of New York University released the first of several stages of a study aimed at sorting through and comparing the effects of these different care arrangements, with an eye toward isolating the effects of specific arrangements. This first installment of a longitudinal study focused on academic achievement of 599 “students enrolled in the first, second, and third grades of three public schools in the Northeastern United States.” [*An Ecological Analysis of After-School Program Participation and the Development of Academic Performance and Motivational Attributes for Disadvantaged Children*, Joseph L. Mahoney, Heather Lord, Erica Carryl, in *Child Development*, July/August 2005, Volume 76, Number 4, pp. 811-825, p. 813] When completed, the study will track afterschool students for four years, comparing students with four different types of afterschool arrangements: those in afterschool programs, those cared for by parents, those cared for by a combination of siblings or in self care, and those cared for by a combination of other adults and in sibling or self care.

Students in the study were enrolled in a large urban school district, and most lived in poverty. The ongoing study is supported by a grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

This first installment found that, “The reading achievement of children in ASP [afterschool program] care was significantly higher than of those in each of the three alternative care arrangements. Expectancy of success was also significantly higher for children in ASP care

compared with children in other adult/non-adult care.” Refining their analysis, the researchers also looked at how children’s level of engagement in an afterschool program affected academic outcomes, and concluded that, “Children in the high-ASP-engagement subgroup had significantly higher reading achievement than did those in the three alternative care arrangements,” while children with low-engagement achieved at higher levels than only some of the other three groups.

Other installments of the study are reported on in the Afterschool Alliance’s *Summary of Formal Evaluations of Afterschool Programs’ Impact on Behavior, Safety and Family Life*, available on the Afterschool Alliance website.

### **LA’s BEST**

Los Angeles’s Better Educated Students for Tomorrow, or LA’s BEST, is among the largest and best known afterschool programs in the nation. Launched in 1988 as a partnership between the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the city of Los Angeles and the private sector, the program operates at 180 school sites, serving more than 26,000 students. Schools are chosen for participation because of the generally low academic achievement among their students, or because of the low economic status of the community, or high gang or crime rates in the neighborhood.

Since early in the life of the program, the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation has conducted evaluation studies. The studies have focused on a variety of topics, using a range of measures. The Center released its separate studies in March 1990, March 1991, July 1991, December 1993 and spring 1995. In June 2000, the Center released a comprehensive report summarizing each of the five previous studies and adding a rich set of findings based on its five-year tracking of the academic performance and school attendance of LA’s BEST students who were in 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades in the 1993-94 school year. Then in early 2006, the Center released a long-term “effect study,” specifically focused on the long-term impact on students of their participation in LA’s BEST, taking advantage of the massive data set collected over the years.

In particular, the 2006 study (“Keeping Kids in School: An LA’s BEST Example: A Study Examining the Long-Term Impact of LA’s BEST on Students’ Dropout Rates,” [https://www.lasbest.org/resourcecenter/Keeping\\_Kids\\_in\\_School\\_Exec\\_Sum.pdf](https://www.lasbest.org/resourcecenter/Keeping_Kids_in_School_Exec_Sum.pdf)) examined the dropout rates of students who had participated in LA’s BEST for at least one year, finding statistically significant differences between LA’s BEST students and a similar sample of non-participating students. Moreover, the study found that the dropout rates of LA’s BEST students who participated most frequently and for the longest period of time were most affected:

“[T]he more regularly the students attended the program, the higher the reduction of the hazard of dropping out of school. Most interestingly, LA’s BEST participation also appeared to have a significant effect in reducing the hazard of dropping out for low-income students; that is, the greater the low-income status at the baseline, the longer participation in LA’s BEST will keep these students in school. Since LA’s BEST has specifically designed the program to serve low-income students, it is encouraging to see the program has a significant effect on the targeted population.

The 2000 study had similarly positive conclusions. “To study LA’s BEST schools,” the authors wrote, “we obtained information about students including ethnicity, gender, language proficiency status, eligibility for free/reduced lunch (the proxy for low-income level) and disability status. In addition, we collected outcome data including achievement test scores (using either the *Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills* [CTBS] or the more recently adopted *Stanford-9 Achievement Test* [SAT-9] in reading, mathematics, and language arts. The rate at which students were redesignated as fully proficient in English was also collected. We also obtained school absence rates, course-taking patterns and rates of student mobility (moving between schools or out of the district.”

In addition, because of the size of the LA’s BEST program and of the LAUSD school system, researchers were able to track an extraordinarily large sample of students and a correspondingly large “control” group: more than 4,000 LA’s BEST students and more than 15,000 non-participating students. The sheer numbers of students tracked make the data produced highly reliable.

The findings are powerful evidence of the value of afterschool programming. In short, the study found that LA’s BEST participants, defined as students who participated regularly and over a period of more than one year, when compared to non-participating students, were absent less from school, “show positive achievement on standardized tests in mathematics, reading and language arts,” and had “higher language redesignation rates to English proficiency.” [Quoting from LA’s BEST’s summary of the findings, at [http://www.lasbest.org/resourcecenter/ucla\\_past.php](http://www.lasbest.org/resourcecenter/ucla_past.php).] Specific findings:

- “[O]ur results show that higher levels of participation in LA’s BEST led to better subsequent school attendance, which in turn related to higher academic achievement on standardized tests of mathematics, reading and language arts.” [page 7] [This and subsequent quotes for this study are from *A Decade of Results: The Impact of the LA’s BEST After School Enrichment Program on Subsequent Student Achievement and Performance*, a longitudinal study report and a synthesis of research begun in 1990 by the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation with support from the Bandai Foundation and the City of Los Angeles. June 2000. Denise Huang, Barry Gribbons, Kyung Sung Kim, Charlotte Lee, Eva L. Baker.]
- “Language redesignation rates favored LA’s BEST students when compared with non-LA’s BEST students for the cohort analyzed (fourth grade, 1994-1995). Significant differences in favor of LA’s BEST students were found for subsequent redesignation rates in Grades 6 and 8. No significant differences were found in comparing performance for Grades 5 and 7.” [page 8.]
  - “Absence follow-up data for the fifth-grade cohort (1994-1995) showed that students who participated in LA’s BEST had significantly fewer absences in Grades 6 and 7, although no differences were detected in Grades 8 and 9.” [page 8.]
  - “Although in the initial year LA’s BEST students began with statistically significant mathematics achievement scores lower than those of non-participants, in 1997-1998 those differences no longer existed.” [page 9.]

Researchers conclude: “From our perspective, it looks as if LA’s BEST is a program that, when followed as a regular part of students’ broad educational experience, results in statistically important differences in student outcomes. The fact that we can detect *any* change on standardized achievement measures in itself is notable, for most educational interventions are unable to show impact on measures not tightly tied to the curriculum, or on follow-up achievement after a particular program is over. On a practical level, LA’s BEST needs to focus its attention on increasing the attendance of enrolled students. It may be that high-level attenders do so because they and their parents are more highly motivated, and this interest transfers to achievement. But it is equally likely that coming to school and to the LA’s BEST program regularly is the reason for good performance and persisting impact subsequent to leaving LA’s BEST.” [pages 9-10.]

### ***Pathways to Progress, St. Paul, Minnesota Public Schools***

Operating with a three-year 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers grant, in 2000 the St. Paul, Minnesota public schools established Pathways to Progress, an eight-site afterschool program. Between 2000 and 2003, the sites served more than 3,000 students, one-third of all students enrolled at the eight participating schools.

Researchers Kyla Wahlstrom, Tim Sheldon and Ashley Murphy of the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement of the University of Minnesota (<http://education.umn.edu/CAREI/default.html>) conducted an evaluation of the program, assessing its success in achieving its principal objectives, among them, increasing student academic achievement. Released in March 2004, the evaluation used a matched-pair technique, comparing students who had attended the program for 30 or more days each year with matched students who had not participated in the program. It found that:

- “In reading and math, more Pathways participants scored above the national norm on the SAT10 and fewer students scored in the lowest quartile.” [This and subsequent quotes for this study are from *Final Evaluation Report, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, Pathways to Progress, St. Paul, Minnesota*, page 3.]
- “Data gathered on both two-year and three-year regular participants indicate the groups experienced continuous progress in their standardized test scores for both reading and math.... Regular participants frequently began with lower scores in the years prior to Pathways involvement and still completed 2003 with higher scores on the standardized tests in both subject areas.”
- “Pathways students experienced dramatically better school attendance, with participants attending 18.44 more school days and missing 9.57 fewer school days than their nonparticipant counterparts.”
- “Middle school students in Pathways generally received better marks in English and math and more of the grades received by these students were satisfactory ones—a grade of C minus or better.”

### ***The Foundations Inc. After School Enrichment Program***

For more than a decade, Foundations, Inc. has operated extended-day enrichment programs and provided technical assistance to other afterschool sponsors. During the 2001-2002 school year, Drs. Stephen P. Klein and Roger Bolus of Gansk & Associates, of Santa Monica, California, administered pre- and post-tests in mathematics and reading to first- through fifth-grade students in 19 Foundations programs in three states. A summary of the report is available at [http://www.childtrends.org/what\\_works/city\\_scan/Philadelphia/Foundations%20Inc.\\_expanded.htm](http://www.childtrends.org/what_works/city_scan/Philadelphia/Foundations%20Inc._expanded.htm). The full report, issued in December 2002, concludes:

- “Foundations students made substantial improvements in average scores between the fall pretest and spring posttest. In fact, their average score gains in mathematics were somewhat greater than what would be expected given the results obtained in CTB/McGraw-Hill’s national norm sample. The Foundations students’ gains in reading kept pace with those made in this national norm sample.” [page 2] [This and subsequent quotes for 2001-2002 results are from *Improvements in Math and Reading Scores of Students who Did and Did Not Participate in the Foundations After School Enrichment Program During the 2001-2002 School Year*, Stephen P. Klein, Ph.D. and Roger Bolus, Ph.D., Gansk & Associates, December 2, 2002.]
- “Over the course of the school year, Foundations’ afterschool students’ test averages moved them up national percentile rankings - by an average of 10 percentile rankings in mathematics reading, and an average of 2 percentile rankings in reading.” [page 10]
- “Foundations students fared very well by comparison to non-Foundations students at the studied schools. The mathematics “effect size” difference averaged .39 (representing 39/100<sup>ths</sup> of a standard deviation unit), in afterschool students’ favor. In reading, a similar finding: a .41 effect size advantage for afterschool students.” [page 14]

In September 2003, Drs. Klein and Bolus released a follow-up report, assessing data from the 2002-2003 school year, again finding statistically significant improvement.

- “The major finding from this analysis is that there was a statistically significant improvement in scores between the pretest and posttest at every grade level and in every subject. Moreover, the amount of gain was greater than what would be expected given the results in the national norm group. For example, the average FOUNDATIONS’ student was at the 40th percentile in mathematics on the pretest and at the 46<sup>th</sup> percentile on the posttest. The corresponding values for reading were 45th on the pretest and 48th on the posttest. Language arts was 43<sup>rd</sup> percentile on the pretest and 48<sup>th</sup> on the posttest. Results were similar within grade levels.” [page 7] [This and subsequent quotes for 2002-2003 results are from *Improvements in Basic Skills Scores of Students Who Did and Did Not Participate in the Foundations After School Enrichment Program during the 2002-2003 School Year*, Stephen P. Klein, Ph.D. and Roger Bolus, Ph.D., Gansk & Associates, Santa Monica, California, available from Foundations, Inc., by emailing info@foundationsinc.org.]
- “We conducted regression analyses to assess the Foundations program’s overall effect on improving the students’ test scores. These analyses predicted a student’s posttest score on a test on the basis of that student’s pretest score on that same test, grade level, and “group” (i.e., Foundations versus non-Foundations). These analyses found that the students who

participated in the Foundations program had about a 5-point higher posttest score (which is equivalent to about one tenth of a standard deviation unit) than did similarly situated non-participants (see Table 6). All the differences in Table 6 were statistically significant (at  $p < .10$ ).” [page 11]

- “The students who participated in the Foundations program during the 2002-2003 school year made substantial gains in math, reading, and language arts scores between the fall pretest and spring posttest. These gains generally exceeded the progress of students in CTB/McGraw-Hill’s national norm sample. First graders in the Foundations program did particularly well, especially in mathematics. Foundations students also had statistically significantly greater gain scores between pretest and posttest than did comparable non-Foundations students who were tested under the same conditions and at the same time (see Table 6). It is not clear why fourth and especially fifth graders who were not in the program gained slightly (but not significantly) more between the pretest and posttest than did Foundations students. This anomaly may stem from a selection effect that was not accounted for by their pretest scores or perhaps to differences in how well the Terra Nova aligns with the Foundations’ curriculum across the different grade levels.” [page 11]

### ***San Diego’s ‘6 to 6’ Extended School Day Program***

San Diego has developed one of the nation’s most ambitious afterschool programs, with the goal of making affordable programs before and after school available to every elementary and middle school student in the City of San Diego. Two significant evaluations of the program have been conducted, one an interim report by WestEd, released in April 2001, the other by Hoffman Clark and Associates released in July 2001. Using random sampling of sites, document review, interviews, focus groups and site observations, WestEd found:

- “Parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the program, “including their perceptions of the quality of academic enrichment, the degree to which children looked forward to the program, communication with staff, success at helping children complete homework, and the promotion of positive behavior in children.” [All bullets from Harvard Family Research Project website at <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/san-diego-s-6-to-6-extended-school-day-program>.]
- “Almost two-thirds of responding parents noticed improvements in their children’s academic performance.”

Relying on random sampling of program participants and reviewing a variety of data, WestEd’s study concluded:

- “Reading scores for “6 to 6” students improved. Fifty-seven percent of students increased their reading scores over the course of the studied year, and SAT-9 reading scores increased.”
- “Nearly ten percent of children moved up into the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher in 2000 by comparison to 1999 reading scores.”
- “Forty-four percent of students increased their SAT-9 math scores.”

### ***The Boys & Girls Clubs' Project Learn***

Begun in 1996, the Boys & Girls Clubs' Project Learn focuses on providing youngsters with "high-yield learning activities," including weekly discussions with knowledgeable adults, leisure reading, writing activities, homework help, helping others and games that rely on cognitive skills. The program has been implemented in full at one-tenth of the Clubs' 3,300 sites, and all sites are implementing components of the program. Steven P. Schinke, Ph.D., of New York's Columbia School of Social Work led an evaluation of the program that relied on a quasi-experimental design. Three groups of students were identified, in five separate cities. The groups consisted of:

- Students participating in Boys & Girls Clubs programs that had implemented Project Learn, (BGC program sites),
- In the same cities, students at Boys & Girls Clubs that had not implemented Project Learn (BGC comparison sites), and
- In the same cities, students at non-Boys & Girls Club sites that had not implemented the kind of enhanced learning initiatives characteristic of Project Learn (non-BGC comparison sites).

All students in all groups lived in public housing projects, and the sites were chosen to be nationally representative of students in public housing. Data on students' academic performance were collected four times: before they began the program, six months after they began, 18 months after they began, and 30 months after they began. Findings included:

- “The level of program involvement, as rated by teachers on a scale of 0 to 10, was found to be associated with a number of self-reported academic outcomes.” [All bullets from *A Profile of the Evaluation of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America—Project Learn/Educational Enhancement Program*, Harvard Family Research Project, <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/boys-girls-clubs-of-america-project-learn-educational-enhancement-program>. Based on *Enhancing the Educational Achievement of At-Risk Youth*, Steven P. Schinke, Ph.D. et. al.]
- “As program involvement increased, engagement in reading, use of verbal skills, writing, tutoring, and the study of geography all significantly ( $p<.05$ ) increased as well.”
- “Data from teacher reports at final follow-up reveal that program and BGC comparison youth more than non-BGC comparison youth had more positive reading skills, writing skills, games skills, overall school performance, and interest in class material.”
- “School grades at 30-month follow-up favored program youth over BGC comparison youth and non-BGC comparison youth on overall averages, reading scores, spelling scores, history scores, science scores, social studies scores, and attendance. At the 30-month follow-up, program and BGC comparison youth had better grades in math than non-BGC comparison youth.”
- “Average grade increases over the 30-month study period were greatest for program youth. Program youth increased their average grades by 11 percent from baseline to the 30-month measurement while BGC comparison youth and non-BGC comparison youth, over the same period, increased their average grades by .4 percent and .3 percent, respectively.”

- “Program youth missed an average of only 2.19 days of school a year at the 30-month measurement as compared to missing an average of 6.4 days a year at baseline. In contrast, BGC comparison youth went from missing an average of 4.85 days of school in the baseline year to missing an average of 12.33 days a year at the 30-month follow-up. Similarly, non-BGC youth went from 7.47 days at baseline to 16.67 at follow-up. The differences between the school attendance of program youth and youth in both comparison groups at 30 months were statistically significant at  $p<.05$ , while they had not been significantly different at baseline.”

\* \* \* \*

*The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org).*

## Appendix A

### *Afterschool Evaluations at a Glance*

<b>Large-Scale Studies</b>			
<b>Study Subject</b>	<b>Evaluator/Author</b>	<b>Release Date</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>
The Promising After-School Programs Study	Deborah Lowe Vandell, University of California, Irvine; Elizabeth R. Reisner, Policy Studies Associates, Inc.; and Kim M. Pierce, University of California, Irvine	October 2007	The study of the effect of afterschool programs on nearly 3,000 low-income students at 35 high-quality afterschool programs across the nation, found that “regular participation in high-quality afterschool programs is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits as well as reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students.” “Elementary school students who regularly attended the high-quality afterschool programs (alone or in combination with other activities) across two years demonstrated significant gains in standardized math test scores, compared to their peers who were routinely unsupervised during afterschool hours.”
CASEL’s Meta-Analysis of the Impact of After-School Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills	Roger P. Weissberg, President of the University of Illinois at Chicago-based Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and Professor Joseph Durlak, Loyola University – Chicago	January 2007	The meta-analysis spanned 73 separate studies of afterschool programs, and found that “Youth who participate in after-school programs improve significantly in three major areas: feelings and attitudes, indicators of behavioral adjustment, and school performance. More specifically, after-school programs succeeded in improving youths’ feelings of self-confidence and self-esteem, school bonding (positive feelings and attitudes toward school), positive social behaviors, school grades and achievement test scores.”
Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) 2006 Meta-Analysis of Effects of Out-of-School Time Programs for At-Risk Students	Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) analysis of 35 separate evaluations	Summer 2006	The meta-analysis found that afterschool programs had positive and significant effects among students at risk of failure in students in reading or math, producing positive results on reading achievement, particularly in lower elementary grade levels, and in high school students. Researchers also found positive and significant effects on math achievement, particularly for middle and high school students.

Evaluations of State-Level Initiatives and Programs			
Afterschool Learning: A Study of Academically Focused Afterschool Programs in New Hampshire	Susan L. Frankel, Ph.D., Kim Streitburger and Elizabeth Goldman of Portsmouth-based RMC Research Corporation	2005	The study conducted for the state of New Hampshire of its state- and federally funded, academically focused afterschool programs found that “More than half the students who attended regularly improved both academically and behaviorally.” “Afterschool programs improve students’ learning skills. Classroom teachers reported that students made the most progress in turning in homework on time, completing homework to teachers’ satisfaction, and participating in class.” Further, “Regular attendance seems to contribute to student success.... At the middle school level, where data were richer, more students who attended regularly showed academic improvement than students who attended less frequently. However, even students who attended sporadically showed improvement.”
Young Scholars Program - North Carolina	Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation	2006	Young Scholars participants made significant gains on the NC state standardized tests in both math and reading. Promotion rates for participants increased by 83 percent and regular school day attendance increased. Participant grades also improved, with the number of students receiving F's decreasing by 50 percent while the number receiving A's and B's increased by 38 percent. The study is based on data from 2000-2005.
Massachusetts After-School Research Study (MARS) examined 78 afterschool centers in the state	Intercultural Center for Research in Education and the National Institute on Out-of-School Time	2005	The MARS study identified program characteristics that are most closely related to high quality implementation and explored the links between program quality and youth outcomes. Researchers found that staff, especially those with a strong educational background, and the presence of a highly qualified coordinator or director are key to program quality.
Texas 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Programs	Texas Education Agency	2004	Strong participation in afterschool correlated with better attendance during the regular school day. “Approximately half (48 percent) of youth who participated in three quarters or more of the available 21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC activities missed 5 or fewer days of school during the fall semester, compared to 17 percent of youth who participated in less than one quarter of the available activities.”
California’s After School Education and Safety Program (ASLSNPP)	University of California at Irvine working with the California Department of Education	2002	A statewide evaluation of California’s After School Education and Safety Program (ASLSNPP) demonstrated mathematics gains closely related to students’ level of participation in the program: “The scores suggest that, particularly for students who participate in the ASLSNPP for substantial periods of time, there is a closing of the gap in Math achievement between

			low-income and other students.”
The After-School Corporation (TASC) - NY	Policy Studies Associates	Five-year data released in 2004 (Reports issued each year of the study)	Students who participated in TASC afterschool programs attended school more regularly and improved their academic performance. Results were especially strong for students who participated regularly in the TASC program. At the elementary and middle grades level, TASC participants showed gains in math achievement and school attendance. At the high school level, afterschool participants passed more Regents exams, attended school more regularly and earned more high school credits than their non-participating peers.
Support Our Students - NC	EDSTAR	2004 and 2002	Support Our Students participants' end of grade achievement test scores exceeded the state's improvement goals and the percentages of students who scored at grade level proficiency increased in both math and reading. Participants who were the furthest behind and considered the most at-risk made the greatest gains. Positive outcomes persist over multiple years.
Ohio Urban School Initiative School Age Child Care Project (SACC)	University of Cincinnati College of Education Evaluation Services Center	1999	Children in the Ohio Urban School Initiative School Age Child Care Project (SACC) had higher test scores than non-participating students statewide. “SACC 4 <sup>th</sup> grade students’ scores exceeded the statewide percentages of students meeting proficiency standards in every subject area tested: writing, reading, mathematics, citizenship, and science. SACC 6 <sup>th</sup> graders exceeded the statewide percentages of students meeting proficiency standards in four of the five areas: writing, reading, mathematics, and citizenship.”
<b>Local or Program Level Evaluations</b>			
Evaluation of the California-based Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning initiative (CORAL)	Public/Private Ventures' Amy Arbreton, Jessica Sheldon, Molly Bradshaw, Julie Goldsmith with Linda Jucovy and Sarah Pepper	February 2008	A Public/Private Ventures evaluation of the “Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning” (CORAL) project, an eight-year \$58 million afterschool initiative of the James Irvine Foundation, concluded that the five-city program’s tightly focused literacy programming three to four days a week produced “pronounced gains in achievement for a range of students.” The programs were all based in California. Most afterschool students were elementary-school aged. More than half were designated English learners, and 89 percent were recipients of free or reduced-price lunch. The CORAL programs are in Fresno, Long Beach, Pasadena, Sacramento and San Jose.
Chapin Hall's After-School Programs and Academic Impact: A Study of Chicago's After	Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago	January 2007	Students who participated in the program missed fewer days of school than their classmates, and those who participated most frequently failed fewer core academic courses (English, Math, Science and Social Studies). The finding is particularly noteworthy because the program is not aimed at improving

School Matters			academics. By creating an incentive for students to attend school regularly and giving them something to look forward to after school, researchers conclude, After School Matters helped improve academic performance. Also, over their full high school careers, students enrolled in the program for three or more semesters and those who participated at the highest levels had higher graduation rates and lower dropout rates than similar students not in the program.
Citizen Schools - sites in MA	Policy Studies Associates	January 2008 (most recent installment of ongoing five phase evaluation report)	Former 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Academy participants were more likely to participate and enroll in high-quality high schools and improve attendance than matched nonparticipants. Former participants with high levels of program exposure had a significantly higher rate of on-time promotion to tenth grade than did matched nonparticipants. Overall, former Citizen School participant were more likely to pass the tenth-grade Mathematics and English/Language Arts MCAS tests than were students district-wide.
YMCA of Greater New York's Virtual Y Program	National Center for Schools and Communities at Fordham University	2005	Virtual Y students outperformed a comparison group in attendance and mathematics. Findings are based on seven years of research.
Generacion Diez Adams County, PA	Prevention Research Center at Pennsylvania State University	Data collected between 2001 and 2003	Generacion Diez participants' test scores in reading, spelling and math increased significantly. Students demonstrating greatest gains were from families that were less engaged in school and/or functioning at a lower level.
Mahoney and Lord Ecological Analysis of After-School Program Participation - examining students at three unnamed public schools in the Northeast	Joseph Mahoney and Heather Lord, Yale University and Erica Carryl of New York University	July 2005 (first installment of ongoing evaluation)	In a study comparing afterschool students with those cared for by parents, by a combination of siblings or in self care, and by a combination of other adults and in sibling or self care researchers found that children who were in the highest category of afterschool program attendance had significantly higher reading achievement than children in all other care arrangements.
LA's BEST Los Angeles, CA	UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation	2006 (most recent release of	The newest report issued from the study found that LA's BEST participants were 20 percent less likely to drop out of school than non-participants. Previous reports in the evaluation show that students' regular school-day

		decade-long study with series of reports issued)	attendance improved once they began participating in the afterschool program. That led to higher academic achievement on standardized tests of math, reading and language arts. In addition, language redesignation rates favored LA's BEST students when compared with non-LA's BEST students.
Pathways to Progress - St. Paul, MN	Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, University of Minnesota	March 2004	Pathways participants outperformed comparison students on standardized tests in reading and math, received better grades in English and math and attended school more regularly. The study is based on data collected between 2000 and 2003.
Foundations, Inc. - PA and NJ	Gansk & Associates	2003 (most recent release in series)	Foundations, Inc. students at every grade level scored higher on math, reading, and language arts standardized tests than the comparison group. The study is based on data collected from 2001-2003.
San Diego's "6 to 6" Extended School Day Program - San Diego, CA	Two reports; one by WestEd and one by Hoffman Clark and Associates	2001	WestEd reported that reading scores for San Diego's "6 to 6" students improved. Fifty-seven percent of students increased their reading scores over the course of the studied year, and SAT-9 reading scores increased. Nearly ten percent of children moved up into the 25 <sup>th</sup> percentile or higher in 2000 by comparison to 1999 reading scores. Forty-four percent of students increased their SAT-9 math scores.
The Boys & Girls Clubs' Project Learn	Columbia School of Social Work	2000	A five-site evaluation of Project Learn over 30 months found that engagement in reading, use of verbal skills, writing, tutoring, and the study of geography all significantly increased as program involvement increased. Program youth increased their average grades by 11 percent from baseline to the 30-month measurement while comparison youth increased their average grades by less than 1 percent.